



October 17, 2023

Dear Parents and Community Members,

At approximately 7:10 a.m. this morning, an incident occurred involving the attempted abduction of one of our female high school students. Here's what we know at this time:

- The incident took place in the vicinity of Second/Third Street and Scott Avenue, which is off-campus. See map below.
- The subject is described as a male in his 20s, approximately 6'5" tall, with a slim build. He was wearing black sweatpants and a black hoodie.
- The subject was driving an unidentified make/model white four-door sedan, potentially with rust on the side.
- The subject approached a high school student who was walking to school, asking if they needed a ride. Subsequently, the student promptly left the area and is now safe.
- The Mattawan Police Department is actively investigating the incident, working closely with the VB County Sheriff, and they have increased patrols in the surrounding area.
- Our School Resource Officers and safety personnel are maintaining a heightened presence around our campus.

At this time, law enforcement has not indicated any direct threat to our school buildings. Therefore, we will continue with our regular school day operations.

We commend this courageous student for their quick thinking, trust in their instincts, and assertiveness during this incident. We are incredibly thankful for their actions.

We urge you to take this incident as a reminder to engage in conversations with your children about situational awareness, safety precautions, and what steps to follow should they ever find themselves in a dangerous situation.

For your reference, here are some resources that can assist you with this important dialogue:

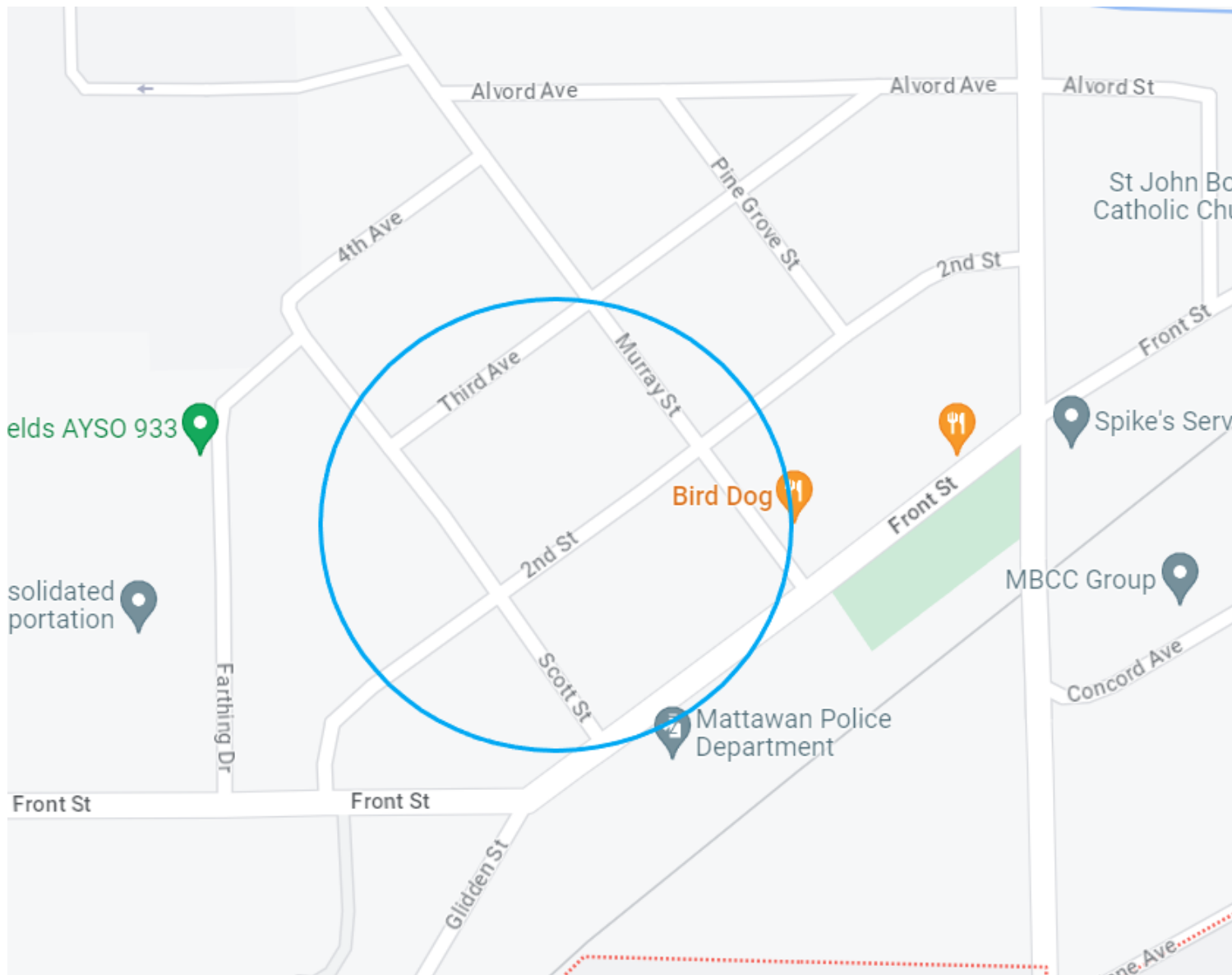
- Nat'l Crime Prevention Council, [Teach kids about strangers](#) (elementary age)
- Nat'l Crime Prevention Council, [Protect yourself from crime](#) (teens, young adults)
- Scholastic Parents, [Talking about Stranger Safety](#) (all age groups)

We are committed to the safety and well-being of our students and will continue to work closely with local authorities to ensure a secure environment for our school community. Please stay informed through our official channels for any updates related to this incident.

Kind regards,

Randy Fleener, Superintendent

Map of Incident Area



## More Resources

Since home reinforcement can help ensure your child's long-term safety, please familiarize yourself with the following tips and refer to them often.

- ➡ Instill youngsters with a sense of self-worth at every opportunity.
- ➡ Make sure even very young children know their full name, whole address and phone number (including area code). Teach them how to dial 911.
- ➡ Reassure your child that most adults are committed to the safety and happiness of children and can be called upon for help if the need arises.
- ➡ Practice choosing a safe stranger with your child (i.e. a mom with kids of her own).
- ➡ Teach children basic body education: the areas of the body covered by a bathing suit are private.
- ➡ Establish that inappropriate touches are against the law. This gives children confidence to assert themselves with those who might try to abuse them.
- ➡ Stress that there should be no secrets from you- especially secrets that make your child scared, sad, or anxious.
- ➡ Explain the importance of reporting abuse or attempted abuse to you or another trusted adult.
- ➡ Do not rely entirely on the "buddy system" for safety. In many documented cases, sisters, brothers and playmates have been victims of terrible crimes when together.
- ➡ Encourage involvement in extracurricular activities. Children with many interests are less likely to experiment with drugs or other negative influences.
- ➡ Make it a priority to get to know your children's friends and their families.
- ➡ Teach youngsters to respect, admire and celebrate the differences in people. Live by the family motto, "Zero Tolerance for Intolerance!"
- ➡ Stress the importance of following netiquette and online safety rules.
- ➡ Above all, encourage children to recognize, trust and follow their instincts about people and situations. Parents should do the same.

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